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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the dialects of the Chinese people who have settled in various countries of Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Burma, Thailand, Laos, North and South Vietnam, and the Khmer Republic. Data are first given regarding the area in general. The data are then broken down according to individual country. The information includes the percentage of Chinese living in each country, the dialects of Chinese spoken, the number of speakers per dialect, and observations on some of the dialects. Maps are included showing the geographical distribution of the various dialects in each country. (CFM)

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CHINESE DIALECTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Leok Har Chan

SETTING: Southeast Asia comprises Burma, Thailand, Laos, the Khmer Republic, North and South Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. By 1972, there were approximately 275 (two hundred and seventy five) million people in this region. Of these, about 14 (fourteen) millions were Chinese. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the figures by countries.

Table 1

Country	No. of Chinese	
Malaysia	3,555,879	(1973 Yearbook)
Singapore	1,579,866	(1973 Yearbook)
Thailand	3,500,000	(Estimate for 1972)
Burma	540,000	(Estimate for 1972)
North Vietnam, SouthVietnam, Khmer Republic, Laos	910,000	(Estimate for 1972)
Indonesia	3,500,000	(Estimate for 1972)
Philippines	733,688	(Estimate for 1972)

Places of Origin of Southeast Asian Chinese

Almost all the Chinese in Southeast Asia originate in the southern provinces of China. Many of the dialects that will be mentioned and/or discussed below are mutually unintelligible. Dialect areas are often further subdivided according to villages, and accordingly, they show dialect variation. The subdivisions are reflected in the various clan associations formed by Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asian countries.

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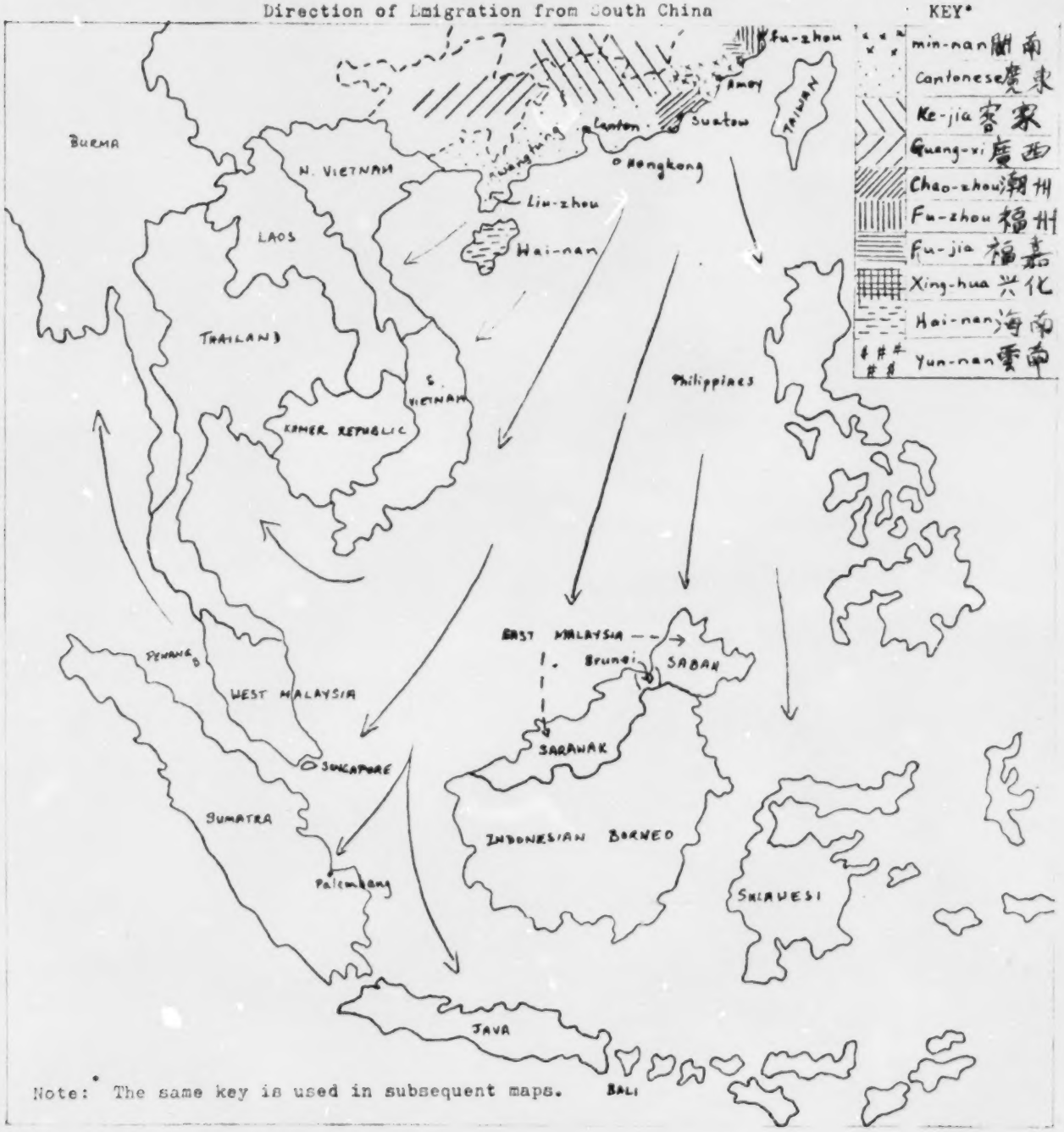
Map 1: Provincial Origins of Chinese in Southeast Asia
Direction of Emigration from South China



Note: The same key is used in subsequent maps.

Note: The dialect classification shown on this map is not comprehensive and exact. This is only an attempt at identifying those dialects found spoken in Southeast Asia.

The northernmost coastal dialect area in China that has sizeable representatives in Southeast Asia is Fu-zhou* (福州) (see Map 1) which consists of the port of Foochow and its vicinity. Southwest of this region is Fu-jia (福嘉) which comprises an area centering on Fu-qing (福清) xian. South of this region is ing-hua (兴化) and Xian-ya (?) xian (縣) The next major area is Fu-jian (福建) a large area of approximately fifteen xian. South of Fu-jian province is Chao-zhou, with about ten xian, having its cultural center and outlet, Shan-tou (Swatow 汕頭). To the left of this area is a vast stretch of Cantonese-speaking groups. This area covers the whole of the central districts of Guang-dong (廣東) and some parts of Southeastern Guang-xi (廣西). The island of Hai-nan (海南) constitutes another dialect area which has direct access to the sea. The dialect spoken here is the Hai-nan dialect, or Hainanese. (Ginsburg & Roberts, 1958: 135)

Distance from the sea did not deter a great number from making their journey southwards to the Nanyang (南洋 South Sea).[2] The most prominent inland dialect area is that of the Hakkas (客家),

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* Romanization of Chinese place names and words are in pinyin(spelling) unless stated otherwise.

1. Xian: A geographical and administrative area (in the suburbs of a city) smaller than a sheng (省) (province) and equivalent to a county.

2. Nanyang: A Chinese expression which literally means 'south sea'. The term refers to Southeast Asian countries where Chinese have settled. The Chinese who settled in these countries were called the Nanyang people which later became synonymous with 'overseas Chinese'. The expression is rapidly going out of use especially since the rise of nationalism in Southeast Asia during recent decades. Without implicating anyone, perhaps it is not wrong to say that the term is very much alive among Taiwanese or those who are close to, but not part of Mainland China. For instance, in a conversation with some visiting Taiwanese at the East-West Center, when I identified myself as a Chinese Malaysian, they came back with the reply - 'So you're a Nanyang Chinese!'
   The majority of the Chinese in Malaysia have chosen to become citizens of Malaysia, first generation immigrants included, (although I do not have statistics to prove my point.) However, it

also known as Ke(客)which literally means 'guest'.[3] In fact these never had a permanent place of abode as the other dialect groups had, for they were pushed from one place to another. It is not surprising therefore, to find them in Southeast Asia, despite the fact that they were removed from the coast. The major port of embarkation for the Hakkas was Shan-tou (Swatow).

The Guang-xi(廣西)dialect area in central and eastern Guang-xi also has representatives in Southeast Asia. Yun-nan(雲南) is another. Migrants travelled overland into Burma, Thailand, Laos and North Vietnam.

Besides these major areas, there are also others that are less significant, in terms of numbers, in Southeast Asia. In fact one rarely heats of them, let alone meeting speakers of these dialects. These less well-known groups are lumped together under 'Others' in Table 3 (p. 14). Of these, one is Liu-zhou(柳州)a dialect spoken in the Liu-zhou peninsula in southern Guang-dong(廣東) Another is the Shang-hai dialect which is a member of the Wu dialect group.

Of all the dialect groups mentioned so far, five of them are outstanding in terms of numbers in Southeast Asia. These are, in order of numerical strength, Chao-zhou(潮州),Min-nan(閩南), Guang-dong(廣東), Ke-jia(客家)and Hai-nan dialects.

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is interesting to note that the Chinese dialects are not given up consciously because of political reasons. In fact they are still widely used. Whatever change that is taking place is mainly due to sociological and linguistic factors.

China-born Fu-jian(Hok-kien)福建-speaking Chinese often refer to the Nanyang as the 'foolish regions', obviously referring to the local inhabitants and their non-Chinese ways. This term comes up quite often when reference is made to so-and-so's 'wife of the foolish regions', (that is, the wife is Malaysian-born).

3. ke(客): This was a euphemism used for the homeless people who were reputedly believed to have been pushed from one region to another in China. The Ke people (Hakkas) are originally refugees from the northern provinces of China. Instead of calling them 'homeless', they were politely referred to as 'guests'. Despite all the politeness recorded, it is believed that the Ke people developed into a tough and hardy race because they had to fight

Chinese Emigration to Southeast Asia

Early Chinese chronicles report trade between India and China as early as the seventh century B.C. The Malay peninsula (now called West Malaysia), being halfway between the two countries, served as a convenient meeting place for trade. But it was not until centuries later, in the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth that there was any sizeable group of Chinese settlers in the Malay peninsula. Between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, intermittent streams of Chinese emigrants made their way into the countries of Southeast Asia, their increase or decrease in numbers controlled by the political and economic climate of the countries concerned. The first permanent settlement was at Palembang on the east coast of Sumatra, during the fourteenth century. Singapore, then known as Tumasik, also had some settlers about the same time. Emigration to Southeast Asia was by land and sea. The most prominent and significant were the sea-routes which brought the adventurers to key positions in Southeast Asia such as the coastal strips of mainland Southeast Asia and most of the islands of the Philippines and Indonesia. Apart from these, there were others who entered Burma, Thailand, Laos, as well as Vietnam from the north. Most of these were from Yun-nan.

Reasons for Emigration

Opportunities for trade encouraged the early Chinese traders to make expeditions to Southeast Asia. Others, inspired by the accounts brought back by successful ones, made their way to the Nanyang too, hoping to find gold and a better life, even in the face of massacre under the Spanish in the Philippines, and the Dutch in Indonesia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A marked exodus of Chinese from China occurred in the fifteenth century, and it was in keeping with the policy of the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644) to promote overseas trade and closer relations with

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back the unfriendly people amongst whom they settled.

Southeast Asian countries. Emigration reached its peak during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Generally speaking, the motive for emigration was trade and a desire for a better life. Yet each country offers specific attractions for the Chinese who made their way there. The nineteenth century was a century of British supremacy in Asia as well as expanding Chinese economic power in Southeast Asia. By the end of the eighteenth century, Chinese influence in Thailand was already established. When in 1688 Europeans were barred from the country, the Chinese were given every privilege by the Siamese kings to develop the economy of the country. During the eighteenth century, the Chinese gained full control of the rice industry, the shipbuilding industry and the coastal and inland river transport of the country. The discovery of tin and gold deposits in the Kra Isthmus and the Malay peninsula attracted even more Chinese. With the greater demand for Chinese labor in mines and in pepper and gambier estates, the Chinese themselves devised ways and means to supply labor directly from the coastal provinces of south China. Although recruiting methods were often cruel and inhuman, young men from the poor southern provinces were willing to risk everything to emigrate to strange lands in search of a better life.

In the case of Malaysia, the Chinese arrived in the country at a very early stage, but it wasn't until 1786, when British influence was established with the founding of Penang, and particularly from the middle of the nineteenth century with the need of British colonial enterprise for a larger labor force, that Chinese immigration became large-scale. In West Malaysia, the Chinese were mostly recruited to work in the tin mines and rubber estates. In East Malaysia,[4] they were brought in to work

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4. East Malaysia comprises Sabah (formerly British North Borneo) and Sarawak. The name came into use after the formation of Malaysia in 1964.

on the tobacco and rubber plantations. Before long, a great number of these workers established themselves in more lucrative businesses of their own.

In Indonesia, the Min-nan (閩 南) people and the Hakkas settled in great numbers as early as the first half of the eighteenth century. These form the majority of the Chinese population. They were originally imported to work in the gold mines in West Borneo and the tin mines in Bangka, Belitung and the east coast of Sumatra. Others were imported to work in the tobacco estates in Sumatra, and the rubber estates in Java, Bangka and Belitung.

Chinese immigration in Burma was by land and sea. Chinese from the province of Yun-nan(雲 南)entered Burma to trade, mine and engage in agriculture. Those who entered from the south concentrated in Rangoon and Moulmein and are engaged in commerce and industry. (See Map 8, p.31).

In Vietnam, the fertile Mekong delta attracted Chinese immigrants in great numbers, but only a small group found a place for themselves in the Tongking and Red River delta and Annam.

The strategic position of Singapore made it ideal for commerce. When Raffles founded Singapore in 1819, the influx of Chinese into Penang decreased in favor of Singapore. As these came to trade, it is inevitable that they should dominate the core of trading and businesses and establish themselves in the city.

In the Philippines, it was the great success of the junk trade which encouraged many Chinese traders and immigrants to establish merchant colonies in Manila, Lingayen, Jolo and other places. The early Chinese traders brought over for sale pottery, cloth(silk), rice, wine, jewels and perfumes, and in exchange, they bought gold dust, silver (from the Spanish), cotton fibers, raisins, iron, tropical hardwoods, spices and slaves. It is believed that they began to settle in great numbers only after the Spanish arrival on the scene. Intermarriage with Filipino women was seen as an economic necessity for the Chinese traders, for it assured them of trading rights, and offered some kind of protection for their businesses.

where a certain dialect group predominates, that dialect becomes the trade language or the common language among the Chinese of different dialect backgrounds. Speakers of other Chinese dialects use their own dialect at home and among their own minority group, but use the common language outside that circle. A very good example is West Malaysia. Penang is a Min-nan dominated area, yet there are pockets of other dialects within the island itself. Similarly, in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, or in the tin-mining town, Ipoh, Cantonese serves as the common language among the Chinese, because of the predominance of Cantonese speakers in these two areas. It is interesting to note that the common dialect of a particular area is used only among the Chinese. Other races do not use this trade language. A Chinese shopkeeper or attendant will use a colloquial form of Malay (bazaar Malay) with their Malay, Indian or Eurasian clients and customers. The result of the influence of Chinese on Malay is hilarious. It could be an entire area of study by itself.

The predominance of one dialect in a particular area can be easily explained. As the Chinese emigrated, they left by the shiploads from different ports in south China. On arrival at their destination, those responsible for importing the men smuggled them off to the mines and plantations. Even for those who came of their own accord, it is the natural thing for speakers of the same dialect to group together. These immigrant streams were later fed by successive groups of relatives and friends. Hence one finds that although various dialect groups are found in a particular district, they are not equally intermixed. Each tends to predominate in a certain area, almost to the exclusion of others. However, an exception is large cities and towns where there is greater occupational mobility. In such places, there is a more equal admixture of dialects. In recent post-war years, many have left their dialect groups, going wherever the lights are brightest and where they can get better jobs. Improvement and development in education have contributed to the gradual breaking up of such dialect pockets. Furthermore, among the English-educated, occupational mobility is high, and these use English as their medium of communication. The Chinese dialect is therefore used

only within the home. As housing estates are opened up, and new houses sold like hot cakes (very often even before the foundation is laid), there tends to be a greater admixture of families speaking different dialects. In the choice of a house, dialect affinity of neighbors is not even a factor for consideration. If the locality is favorable and the price of the house is within their means, they will buy it. So a min-nan* family could have a Cantonese family living next door, and a fu-zhou family two doors away. Each family will tend to use their own dialect within the home. Whether the home dialect is used or not and the extent to which it is used depends on the presence or absence of first generation Chinese among the family members and the language adaptability of domestic servants in the home. It has been observed that in Singapore, the employment of Cantonese women as domestic help has made a large number of non-Cantonese Chinese speak no other dialect except Cantonese. This is not true of Penang. Practically all the Cantonese women employed in Hok-kien homes have learnt to speak Hok-kien. So although the family dialect is used within the family, when neighbors get together or talk over the fence, the predominant dialect of that area is used. In the case of Penang, it is Hok-kien; in the State of Perak, it is Cantonese. In Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, it is also Cantonese. In Petaling Jaya, the satellite town of Kuala Lumpur, which is also close by the University of Malaya, Cantonese is also used, but for the great majority of the English-educated, English is the medium of communication. Generally, a particular dialect is widely spoken if shopkeepers in that area speak that dialect to the exclusion of others. So in order to carry on business or to get things done in the market and elsewhere, residents in that area learn to speak it.

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*min-nan (閩南) This dialect group is commonly referred to as Hok-kien in Malaysia.

Status of Chinese dialects

Chinese dialects in Southeast Asia are considered of no importance whatsoever in nation building. Each Southeast Asian country is concerned with internal organization and self-rule. First of all, as Chinese make up so small a percentage in all of these countries except Malaysia, their numbers do not justify national consideration of the dialects, though economically the Chinese are indispensable. But the one significant reason why they have no status whatsoever in the eyes of the indigenous groups is the fact that the Chinese are immigrants and therefore it is not right to promote these 'foreign' dialects. In some regions for instance Java and Thailand, a large number of nationals who are ethnically Chinese cannot speak their own dialects. Assimilation is easy because of the small percentage of Chinese in these countries. However, in the case of Malaysia, the number of Chinese is almost at par with the Malays. Hence assimilation is a slower process.[6]

As each country emphasises the study and use of its national language, the dialect will gradually be neglected by the third or fourth generation. At present, even the second generation Chinese in Malaysia do not have a strong command of their own dialect. They are more fluent in English (if they are English-educated) than in their own mother tongue, simply because they use English more often than the dialects. However, there are also large numbers who are fluent in neither mother tongue nor English. These tend to use English and Chinese words within a sentence. Syntax of both English and Chinese is confused, with English syntax surfacing in Chinese expressions and Chinese syntax appearing in English constructions.

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6. There are also Chinese in Malaysia who can neither speak nor understand Chinese. They identify themselves as Chinese, but beyond that they draw a complete blank. The only way to find out further details is to refer to their birth certificates where the dialect of the parents is indicated. Therefore it is sometimes misleading to quote population figures and statistics, because a person listed under a certain dialect group may not be an actual speaker of that dialect. These Chinese could be considered "native" speakers of

With the present-day Chinese dialects (especially among the Malaysian-born) there has been much borrowings from Malay. This aspect will be dealt with in a later section.

Among the Chinese, each dialect group regards the others with scorn. The Chinese are fragmented in that sense. Throughout Chinese history, there have been traditional prejudices among the different dialect groups. For instance the Cantonese think of Hok-kiens as stingy and miserly, the Hok-kiens think of the Cantonese as rude, aggressive and capable of wicked deeds. The Hakkas are looked down upon because they are manual workers. The Hainanese men are thought of as lazy and their women as fierce, etc. These are prejudices passed down from generation to generation, so much so that some older generation parents refused to marry their daughters to men of different dialects from their own.[7]

Dialect Distribution in Southeast Asia

The numerical strength of Chinese dialect communities in Southeast Asia vary from country to country. For instance the Fu- zhou (福州) dialect speakers who are a minority group in peninsular Malaysia, make up a great percentage of the Chinese in Sarawak, and the Min-nan (閩南) (Hok-kien) who account for 75% of the Chinese population in the Philippines make up a small percentage of the Chinese in Thailand and Vietnam.

The linguistic maps which follow are based on an unpublished draft manuscript by G. William Skinner of the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University, entitled 'Chinese Communities

English or Malay or both. Chinese who are monolingual in Malay (or a form of Malay) are often referred to as 'Babas'. Many of these come from Malacca which has a longer recorded history than the rest of the country.

7. Information in this paragraph is obtained from correspondence with Ngeah Hong Chee (my brother-in-law), a language teacher trainer with the Language Institute in Kuala Lumpur.

in Southeast Asia' (Skinner: 1950) supplemented by information gleaned from various yearbooks and periodicals. These maps are very tentative in nature, with the exception of Ginsburg & Roberts' very thorough work on the dialect distribution in the peninsula. (Ginsburg & Roberts: 1958, 137)
Dialects were marked in on the basis of information gathered from history and geography texts, and from vague confirmations of people from those countries now studying at the East-West Center.[8]

In this section, I shall deal with each country (except for Laos) beginning with Malaysia, which has the greatest concentration of Chinese compared with all the other Southeast Asian countries, and which has the most complete and accurate figures based on population census and estimates.

Malaysia

Out of a total population of over ten millions in 1970, the Chinese make up about 42%. The percentage has dropped to 38% since. Table 2 below gives the breakdown of figures according to three broad political areas, namely West Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, the last two of which are called East Malaysia.

Table 2

Population Figures for 1970*

Region		Total Population	Chinese%
West Malaysia		8,801,399	37
East Malaysia	Sarawak	977,013	31
	Sabah	655,622	23
Malaysia		10,434,034	42

* Figures obtained from Malaysia- 1973 Yearbook

8. Many of my consultants were non-Chinese, or if they were, non-speakers of Chinese. However, from whatever relics of Chinese words they could remember or have borrowed into their language, one could identify the dialect used in that region of the country.

Table 3

Number of Chinese dialect speakers in Malaysia - 1970

State	Min-nan	Cantonese	Ke-jia	Chao-zhou	Hai-nan	Guang-xi	Fu-zhou	Xing-hua	Fu-qing	Others	Total
Johore	217,310	43,477	99,830	78,150	30,790	12,716	8,466	3,524	1,470	7,245	502,978
Kedah	60,004	25,037	28,218	57,974	4,565	1,594	2,694	460	273	3,444	184,263
Kelantan	21,179	4,812	4,272	1,499	3,023	686	249	337	49	562	36,668
Malacca	68,005	14,410	40,163	13,501	15,900	1,283	597	2,319	178	3,728	160,084
Negri Sembilan	47,723	43,524	63,665	4,717	9,341	5,093	3,892	1,493	417	3,579	183,444
Pahang	34,064	39,575	37,881	6,125	9,187	26,112	1,590	1,069	221	1,842	157,666
Penang	195,538	70,081	41,544	103,044	14,324	642	5,040	470	337	4,346	435,366
Perak	144,295	187,738	174,519	67,777	17,541	21,689	27,540	2,497	5,186	17,455	666,237
Perlis	6,402	2,219	6,062	3,133	732	731	122	28	8	134	19,571
Selangor	266,163	183,866	192,175	49,932	34,967	6,732	6,758	4,192	871	8,692	754,348
Trengganu	8,120	2,849	2,492	1,196	5,388	299	147	535	29	670	21,725
West Malaysia	1,068,803	617,588	690,821	387,048	145,758	77,577	57,095	16,924	9,039	51,697	3,122,350
Tawau	2,147	4,013	17,534	2,849	1,069					1,560	29,172
Sandakan	2,579	8,115	21,317	3,111	1,782					1,637	38,541
West Coast	7,768	5,903	31,705	1,236	2,674					3,468	52,754
Inland	1,944	2,174	8,140	356	672					947	14,243
Sabah	17,418	20,723	79,574	7,687	6,419					7,688	139,509
1st Division	16,591	4,386	69,471	18,987	4,352		5,549	4,806		5,819	129,961
2nd Division	1,880	399	4,784	3,886	527		399	102		695	15,258
3rd Division	10,680	12,433	5,202	1,836	769		72,015	5,029		1,476	109,440
4th Division	5,233	3,269	11,594	2,429	1,192		8,513	576		1,424	34,230
5th Division	2,134	207	559	124	193		1,642	129		143	5,131
Sarawak	36,518	20,694	91,610	27,262	7,033		90,704	10,642		9,557	294,020
East Malaysia	53,936	41,417	171,184	34,949	13,452		90,704	10,642		17,245	433,529
Malaysia	1,122,739	659,005	862,005	421,997	159,210	77,577	147,799	27,566	9,039	68,942	3,555,879
%	31.6	18.5	24.3	11.8	4.5	2.2	4.1	0.8	0.3	1.9	100.0

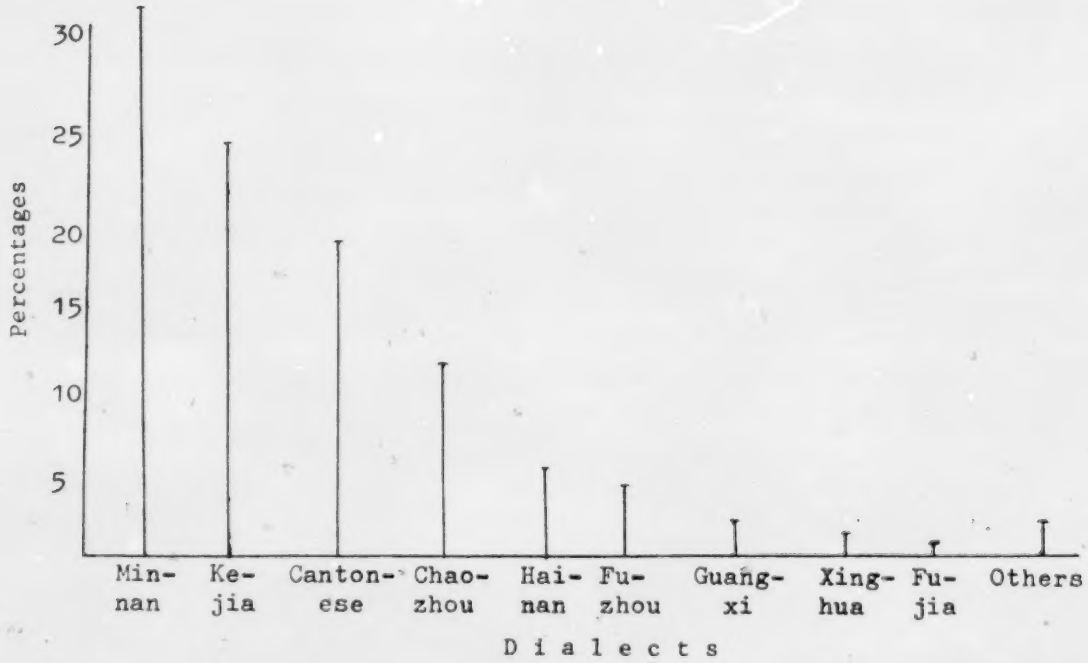

Table 3 and Diagram 1 both show the relative size of each dialect community:-

Min-nan	31.6%
Ke-jia	24.3%
Cantonese	18.5%
Chao-zhou	11.8%
Hai-nan	4.5%
Fu-zhou	4.1%
Guang-xi	2.2%
Xing-hua	0.8%
Fu-qing	0.3%
Others	1.9%

Map 2 shows the concentration of particular dialects in the various states in West Malaysia. It should be noted however, that within a certain dialect area shown on the map, there are a number of towns and villages where the Chinese speak that particular dialect. The Chinese are found in practically every sizeable town and village, owning shops at strategic points and dominating business and trade. On the map, whole states are indicated as having a particular dialect,

Map 2

CHINESE DIALECT COMMUNITIES

(West Malaysia)

Note: This map is based on Ginsburg & Roberts (1958, p.137).

(KEY GIVEN ON p. 2)

even though mountains and swamps are found in them. This however is for the sake of convenience, but it should be borne in mind that these dialect speakers are mostly found in towns and larger villages. Besides, designating a particular dialect to an area does not exclude other dialects from it. In fact an area usually has speakers of other dialects, but the one that is indicated is predominant. This is generally applicable to the dialect distribution in the whole of Southeast Asia.

The Min-nan (Hok-kien) people were the first to arrive in Malaya in considerable numbers, with the establishment of Malacca and Penang as Straits Settlements. They are primarily urban and commercial, and are concentrated in Penang, Malacca, Selangor and Johore. They are also widely employed in agriculture in Selangor and Johore. The dialect is also widely spoken in Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan.

The Cantonese speakers predominate in the former Malay States, and are engaged equally in commerce, industry, agriculture and mining. They form the largest single group in the states of Perak and Pahang. They tend to be rural. The Ke-jia (Hakkas) as in China, are the most rurally inclined of all the dialect groups, and they provide, together with the Cantonese speakers, the bulk of the tin-mining population. The Chao-zhou speakers are the most numerous dialect group in Kedah, next to the Min-nan speakers. They have a tendancy to prefer urban occupations. The Hai-nan speakers are concentrated in towns and villages in the rubber growing districts. They form the largest dialect group in Trengganu after the Min-nan speakers. The Guang-xi dialect speakers are concentrated in a few districts in the states of Perak, Pahang and Johore.

Some Observations on the Min-nan dialect in West Malaysia

The Min-nan dialect (commonly called Hok-kien in Malaysia) can be divided into two broad types, the northern variety, that is, that spoken from the town of Ipoh northwards, and the southern variety, that spoken from Ipoh southwards. The northern variety is represented by the Penang type, and the southern one by the Singapore type. This is only an arbitrary division, because I have not arrived

at any yardstick to measure and pin-point the differences. There are clearly a number of differences in the tones, phonology, vocabulary and syntax. Some of the differences exist because the early pioneers hailed from different regions in the Fu-jian province - regions which originally show dialectal variation.[9] The differences alone will constitute entire areas of analyses and research too extensive for a paper of this nature. I shall just give a few examples to show their difference.

Northern Variety								Southern Variety								Gloss
be			55:					bwe			52:					'buy'
se			55:					swe			52:					'wash'
pe			33:					pwe			33:					'fly'
ke			33:					kwe			33:					'chicken'
khiaw	33:	kiɔŋ		33:				thŋ	33:	si		323:				'spoon'
tu			33:					ti			33:					'pig'
mɔi			323:					bə			323					'porridge'
pan	33:	tiu		323:				tshiu	52:	ki:n		33:				'handkerchief'

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9. This much information is a fact because I have heard my father, (an immigrant Chinese in Malaysia) talk of dialectal differences in Mainland China. One can hear the same kind of differences in the speech of Min-nan speakers throughout the country. An example is the following:-

Variety A				Variety B			
ti	33:			tu	33:	'pig'	
ti	33:	tu	33:	ti	tu	33:	'spider'

Such differences often become the subject of jokes. For instance the story is told of a man who reared a pig in a region which used Variety A. He brought it to market in order to sell it. The market was some distance away from his home - in fact it was situated where Variety B was spoken. He referred to his pig as 'ti' but the buyer kept on using 'tu'. So there was some kind of a 'ti-tu' war going on between them. When he returned to his village, he related all that occurred in his business trip. He told his audience that there was a 'ti-tu' (spider) that weighed 200 katis.

However, there are also differences which are not the result of original dialectal differences, but are brought about because of contact with other language groups in the country, or because of contact with a language that is widely used. There is a noticeable influence of Malay on Penang Min-nan dialect. In vocabulary, the Penang Min-nan dialect exhibits assimilation of loan words from Malay. When this occurs, tones are assigned to them until very often the user is under the impression that they are Chinese words. Some examples are:-

		Malay	Gloss
tua	11: la 22:	tuala	'towel'
tã	11: pe 33:	tapis	'to sieve or strain'
pha	52: lo 11: li 23:	peduli	'to bother'
pa	33: sat 21	pasar	'market'

Besides loan words from Malay, the Penang variety of the Min-nan dialect has loan words from English. Again, tones are assigned to each syllable. eg. ta 52: li 323: pun 52: 'telephone'

ɔ: 33: pit 33: 'office'

In contrast to the Penang Min-nan dialect, the southern variety is not so adulterated with Malay and English loan words, but it is not as 'melodious' or tuneful as the Penang brand. Map 2 gives further information regarding the distribution of Min-nan speakers as well as others.

The foregoing section is a brief and sparse account of differences within one dialect. It is safe to say that the patterns of language change are similar for all the other dialect in Southeast Asia. The speech of the younger generation is, to a certain extent, different from that spoken by their parents or grandparents whose speech is in turn different from that in their place of origin in mainland China, because of the processes or factors that govern language change, such as geographical environments, cultural settings, educational backgrounds and

interference. For instance, to a Cantonese from Hong Kong, the Cantonese spoken in Malaysia is coarse. Besides the liberal borrowings from Malay and English, the vocabulary is limited. There is a lack of idiomatic expressions. In addition to this, the tones have also changed.

EAST MALAYSIA - Sarawak

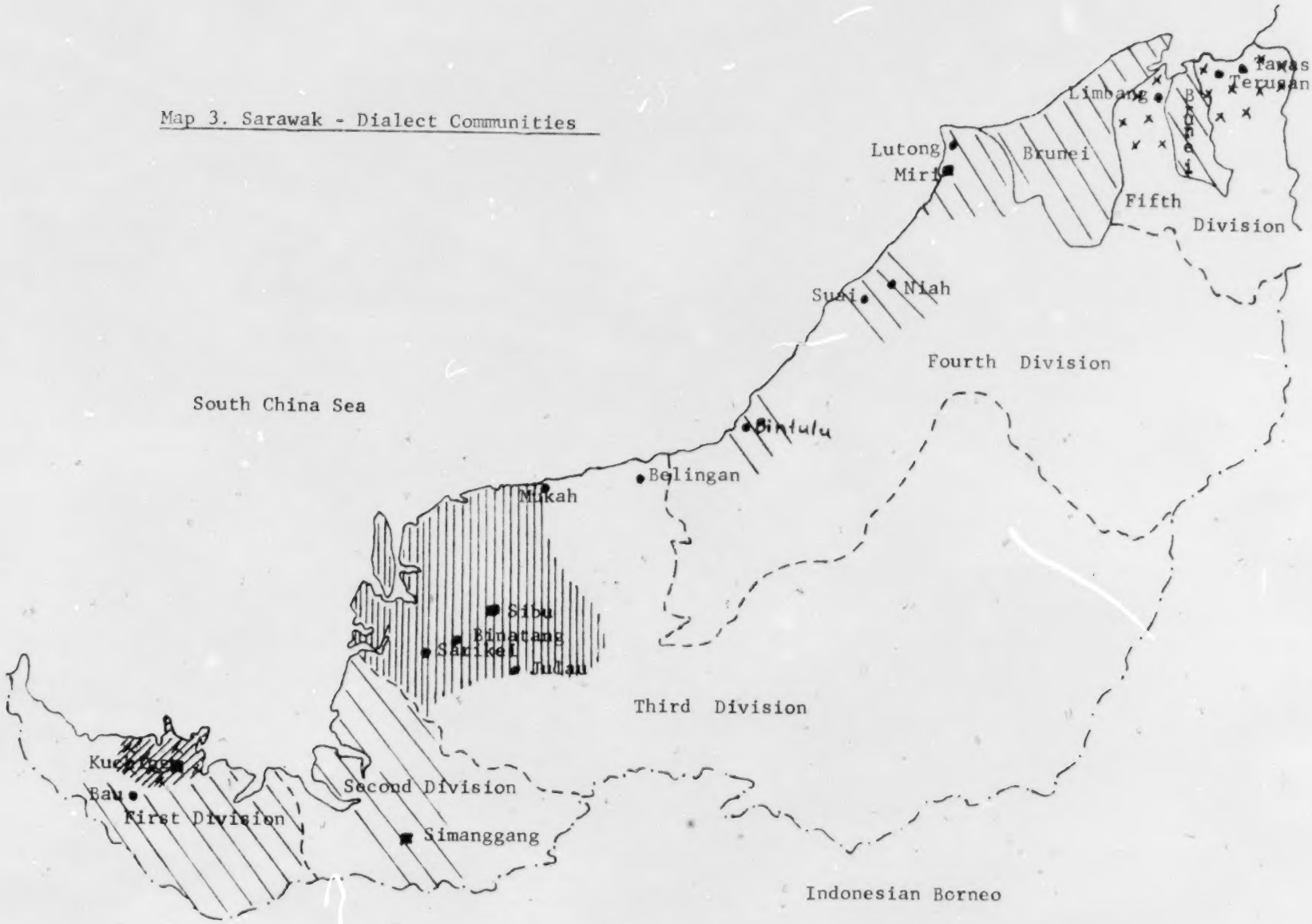
The percentages of different dialects in Sarawak are as follows:-

Ke-jia	31.4%
Fu-zhou	27.5%
Min-nan (Fu-jian)	15.2%
Cantonese	10.6%
Chao-zhou	8.7%
Hai-nan	3.0%
Xing-hua	2.9%

The distribution of these dialect groups is highly variable, but there are several noticeable concentrations. These are shown in Map 3.

Although the Fu-jian and Chao-zhou speakers are small groups, they are mainly urban, and control the main businesses. The Ke-jia dialect speakers tend to be rural, engaging in padi planting, market gardening and processing of sago. There is also a peculiar job specialization among the different groups. For instance, in Kuching, the following have been observed:- (Skinner: 1950, 63).

Occupation	Dialect
84% of bicycle shop owners 35% of bus drivers	Xing-huá
All tinsmiths 78% of tailors	Ke-jia
59% of goldsmiths	Min-nan


Map 3. Sarawak - Dialect Communities
Lutong
Miri
Limbang
Brunei
Fifth
Division
Suai
Niah
Fourth Division
South China Sea
Belingan
Mukah
Sibu
Binatang
Sarikei
Third Division
Kuching
Bau
First Division
Second Division
Simanggang
Indonesian Borneo

Occupation	Dialect
All clock & watch shops Shoemakers	Cantonese
All carpenters	San-jiang
55% of charcoal makers	Liu-zhou
78% of coffee shop owners and workers Domestic service	Hai-nan

EAST MALAYSIA - Sabah

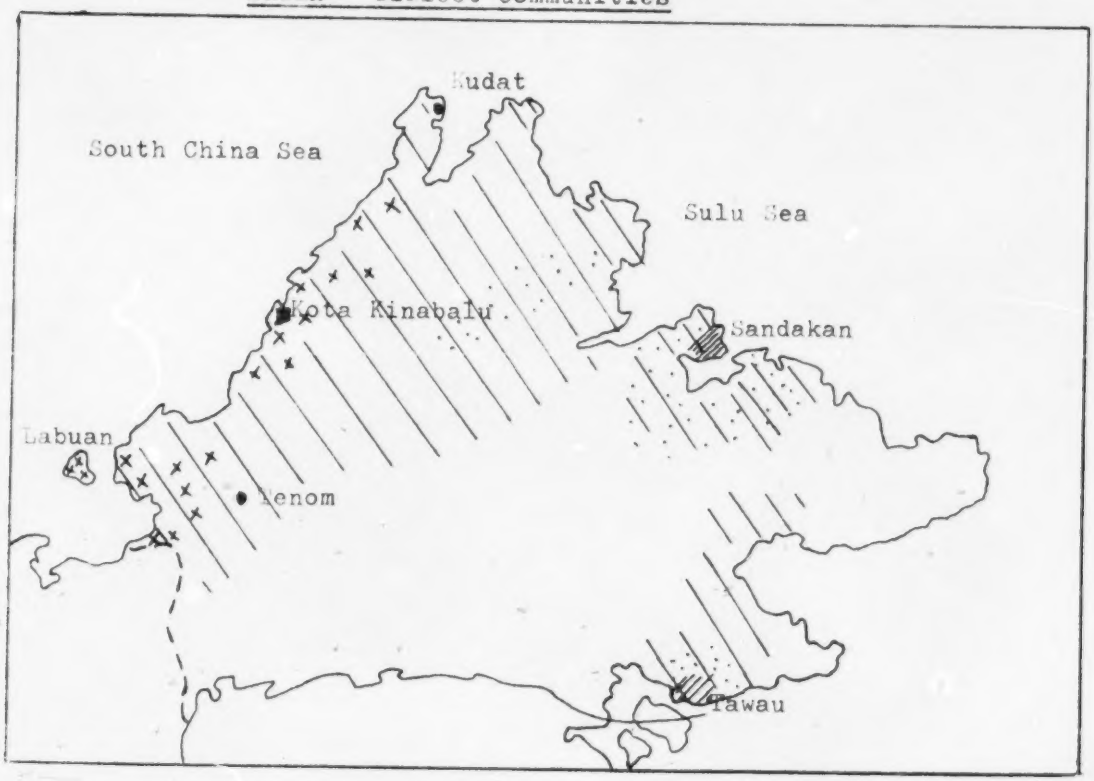
Out of a total population of 622,000, the Chinese form a quarter of the number. Most of them live in and around the towns, especially Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Kudat and Tawau. The relative percentages are as follows:-

Ke-jia	56%
Cantonese	26%
Min-nan	7%
Chao-zhou	5%

As shown in Map 4, the Cantonese are found in concentrated numbers on the East Coast, whilst Min-nan speakers who emigrated from Singapore, are found on the West Coast. The Min-nan and Chao-zhou speakers are generally more urban than the Cantonese and Ke-jia. There is also a small Shan-dong settlement at Kota Kinabalu.

Map 4

Sabah - Dialect Communities



Map 4 shows the major dialects used in Sabah, and their distribution. Historically, the Min-nan dialect speakers in Labuan and its nearby regions travelled from Singapore. The region around Sandakan has a majority of Cantonese speakers. This is the result of trade with Canton and Hongkong.

SINGAPORE

According to Papineau's Guide to Singapore, (1973) the total population of the Republic of Singapore is around 2,200,000. Out of these, about 76% are Chinese. Table 4 shows the number of speakers of different dialects for 1931, 1947, 1957 and 1970. From this Table, it is clear that numbers have increased successively, but the percentage has remained more or less the same, except for a decrease in Cantonese speakers and an increase in Min-nan speakers. In Singapore, the Chinese dominate the commercial world. Thrifty and

industrious by nature, they contribute a major share towards wealth and prosperity of the island by fostering trade with neighboring and overseas countries. No one dialect is the trade language, though the pre-eminent economic position of the Min-nan speakers means that Min-nan is the most useful dialect for business purposes. 81% of Singapore's Chinese population is urban, and 78% of the total Singapore urban population is Chinese.

Table 4

Chinese Dialect Speakers in Singapore.[10]

Dialects	1931	%	1947	%	1957	%	1970	%
Min-nan	180,066	43.0	289,109	39.6	442,707	40.6	666,944	42.2
Chao-zhou	82,369	19.7	157,186	21.6	245,190	22.5	352,971	22.4
Cantonese	94,191	22.5	157,598	21.6	205,773	18.9	268,548	17.0
Hai-nan	19,845	4.7	52,117	7.1	78,081	7.2	115,460	7.3
Ke-jia	19,222	4.6	39,988	5.5	73,072	6.7	110,746	7.0
Fu-zhou	6,538	1.6	9,461	1.3	16,828	1.5	27,075	1.7
Others	16,409	3.9	24,014	3.3	28,945	2.6	38,122	2.4
Total	418,640	100.0	729,473	100.0	1,090,596	100.0	1,579,866	100.0

While the Ke-jia and Cantonese speakers tend to be rural, involved in market gardening, the Min-nan and Chao-zhou ones are urban based. Within the urban center, there is a mixture of all dialects. Hence the distribution is not as clear-cut as is indicated in Map 5. In the days of indentured labor, the Chao-zhou speakers congregated on the north bank of the Singapore River, working in the port and godowns as laborers and port workers. The area is basically a Chao-zhou stronghold, even now. The Hai-nan speakers are widely distributed.

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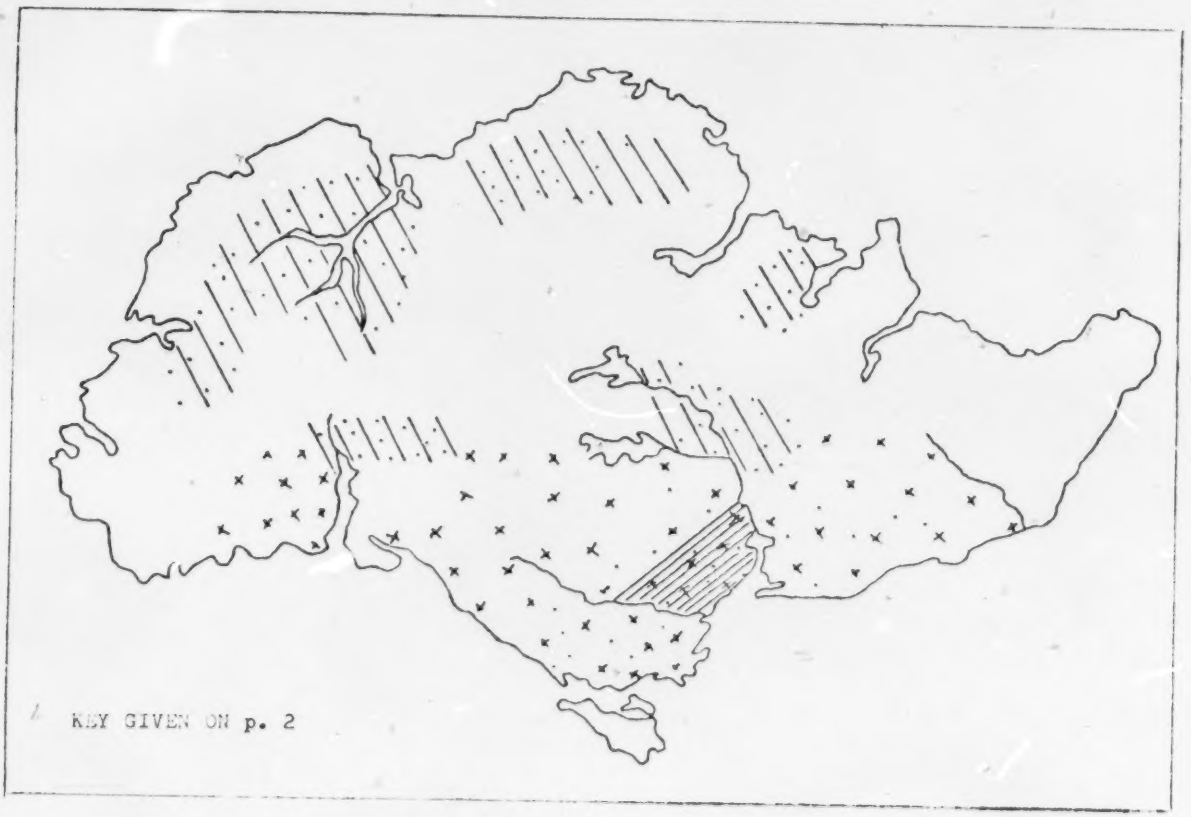
10. Information in Tables 3 and 4 is from a Chinese daily in Malaysia, the Nanyang Siang Pau. The exact date of publication cannot be traced at this point. The newspaper cutting was sent to me by a friend in Malaysia. (Date of public tion was probably around March or April 1974).

As they specialize in running coffee shops, they are often found in urban areas. The rapid city development and the government's attempts at re-housing slum dwellers have very likely changed the dialect pockets. But whatever happens, the Min-nan dialect is still the dialect widely spoken in Singapore.

Map 5: Singapore - Chinese Communities



The Republic of Indonesia

Out of a total population of 117 millions, only 3% are Chinese. The earliest settlers were the Min-nan and Ke-jia dialect speakers who immigrated in large numbers. These form the great majority of the Chinese population. The percentages given below are based on Skinner's estimates. (Skinner: 1950).

Min-nan (Hok-kien)	47%
Ke-jia (Hakka)	21%
Cantonese	12%
Chao-zhou	8%
Hai-nan (Hainanese)	3%

The Min-nan dialect speakers form well over 50% of the Chinese population in the islands of Java, Madura, Sulawesi and other eastern islands. They are largely urban. The Ke-jia dialect speakers concentrate in West Borneo, Bangka and Belitung. They are also important in Java, East Sumatra and the Lesser Sundas. The Cantonese speakers are fairly widely distributed and pockets of these speakers can be found in Java, east and south Sumatra, east Borneo and Sulawesi. As for the Chao-zhou dialect speakers, their pattern of distribution is very much the same as that of the Ke-jia. The Hai-nan dialect speakers are city-dwellers. They are rather evenly distributed throughout the country. Seventy percent of the Chinese in Indonesia are local-born. These are referred to as 'Peranakans'. The rest who are China-born are known as 'Totoks'. It is inaccurate to assume that Chinese racial affinity presupposes ability to speak a Chinese dialect. It is safe to say that the China-born Chinese speak their dialect at home. With the peranakans, the majority have lost their Chinese language heritage. Encountering hostile attitudes, the Chinese have tended to give up their language in favor of Dutch previously, and now, Indonesian. Under the Dutch rule, children of Chinese descent, speaking a Chinese dialect, found it difficult to get a place in schools. Hence the home dialects were gradually replaced with Dutch or Indonesian. It is also a fact that the Chinese in Indonesia, especially those

in Java, have intermarried with native Indonesians to an extent unsurpassed by other Southeast Asian countries, in particular Malaysia.

There are four distinct areas where Chinese have attained considerable numerical strength. They are:- 1) A great circle round Singapore, 2) Northwestern part of Borneo, Bangka, Belitung and Rhio, 3) the east coast of Sumatra, and 4) Jakarta and its environs. In the area covered by (1) - (3), the Chinese make up 17% of the total population, and in (4), they make up 5% of the local population. (Purcell: 1950; 38).

Map 6: Indonesia - Chinese Communities

Status of Chinese dialects in Indonesia

Generally speaking, those who still speak Chinese retain their dialect in the home, or when they meet those of their own kind outside. For many Indonesian nationals of Chinese descent, Indonesian has become the first language. It seems as though they have readily accepted the Indonesian language. However, there is a noticeable exception in Medan. It is about the only place in Indonesia (I may be wrong) where the Min-nan dialect is still widely used among the Chinese. The general feeling among non-Chinese is that this group seems to refuse to integrate. A good contrast is Java where Indonesian is used as the lingua franca. What irritates Indonesians is not so much the dialect used, but the habit of the Chinese to talk in their dialect in public places. When one comes to think of it, one can see that the Chinese have very little choice, or no choice at all, if the Min-nan dialect is the only language they know, and if they have not used Indonesian from birth.

The displeasure shown has really a patriotic bias. The dialect itself has no status whatsoever in the eyes of non-Chinese. The rationale is that since these Chinese chose to live in Indonesia and have adopted Indonesian citizenship, then they should use Indonesian instead of Chinese. High economic status of the Chinese does not give their dialect a corresponding high status.

The Philippines

According to the 1970 census, the total population of the Philippines is 36,684,486 and out of this, less than 2% are Chinese, mainly Min-nan and Cantonese. About 75% are Min-nan dialect speakers, 20% Cantonese, and the rest made up of other dialect groups. At the time when the junk trade flourished, many Chinese traders and immigrants established merchant colonies in Manila, Lingayen, Jolo and other places. For the past 400 years, Chinese have had business dealings with the Philippines, and because Chinese men were too poor to bring their wives along with them, many have intermarried with local Filipino women. Assimilation took place, and Chinese dialects were often neglected. Later on,

with the importation of Chinese brides, and with the rise of Chinese nationalism at the turn of this century, which tended to discourage mixed marriages, the assimilation process slowed down.

As of June 15th 1972, there were 144 Chinese schools with a total enrolment of 68,505 students. (McCarthy: 1972)
The first Chinese school was founded in 1899. Of the one hundred and forty four schools, only one (the Chiang Kai Shek school in Manila) offers college courses. Fifty have high school sections and the rest are elementary level schools. The network of schools is nation-wide, from Apari and Tuguefarao in Northern Luzon, to Jolo in Sulu and Koronadal in South Cotabato. Most of the schools serve the larger urban centers. More than half of the total Chinese school population are found in the Greater Manila zone. Although the early traders from Fu-jian province were not men of China's scholar gentry, they could see the value of a good education.

Map 7: Philippines - Chinese Communities

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A good education was regarded as the key to economic success and upward social mobility. Then with increased immigration of women, the ratio between the sexes was equalized. Offsprings were regarded as Chinese nationals, and hence Chinese education became important.

Map 7 on the previous page shows the distribution of Chinese in the Philippines. They are found in the towns, and in the more developed areas.

Burma

Table 5

Year	Total Population (in millions)	Chinese Population
1931	17	193,594
1950	22	300,000
1972	27	540,000

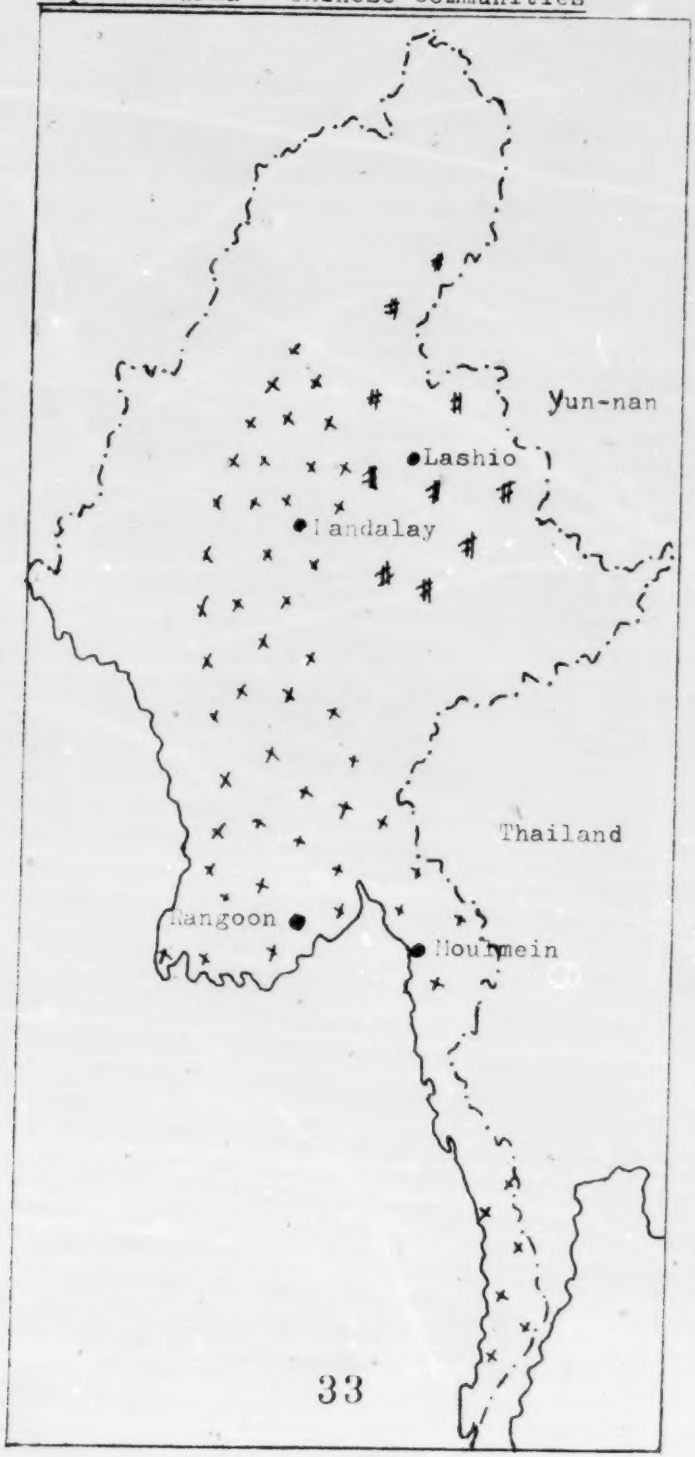
Dialect distribution - 1950 figures

Min-nan	40%	120,000	
Cantonese	25%	75,000	
Yun-nan	20%	60,000	
Ke-jia	8%	24,000	
Hai-nan	3%	9,000	
Others	4%	12,000	(probably Min-nan and Cantonese too).

The Chinese fan out from Rangoon along the railway and steamer lines. (see Map 8). Nearly half the Chinese in Burma are to be found within a hundred miles of the capital city, in and around the Irrawaddy Delta. The Chinese are second to the Indians in rice trade though they also control the trade and commercial enterprise in the urban areas, dealing in various types of merchandise and excelling in fishing and providing ferry services. Besides immigration by way of the sea, there was also a large number of unauthorized immigration in the north by land. These are mostly the Yun-nan dialect speakers whose numbers have dropped since the disturbances in upper and eastern Burma after the Second world war. The Chinese in Burma do not occupy the predominant position that other Chinese do in Malaysia, Thailand,

the Khmer Republic, Indonesia or the Philippines, and are decidedly second to the Indians in the commercial life of the country. In 1950 there were approximately two hundred and eight Chinese schools, 90% of which are of primary level.

Map 8: Burma - Chinese Communities



Thailand

Table 6

Year	Total Population	Chinese Population
1937	14,464,105	524,062
1950	-	2,500,000
1972	35,000,000	3,500,000

About one quarter of the Chinese population in Thailand live in Bangkok and its vicinity, and the remainder are scattered throughout the country, living in the towns rather than in rural communities, and tending to concentrate in the more commercialized districts. The present Chinese population in Thailand is the result of significant increases in immigration which took place during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

The Chinese control the rice trade in Thailand. In the development of the rice industry, there was a regular traffic of coolies between Bangkok and the Chao-zhou port of Shan-tou. This accounts for the predominance of Chao-zhou dialect speakers in the country.

Before the first world war, Chinese men could not afford to bring their wives with them and many intermarried with Thai women. After the war, there was a large-scale immigration of Chinese women. This factor changed the nature of the Chinese population in Thailand. Thai men are very much controlled by their mothers, or rather, they have great respect for them. This being the case, the children of such marriages invariably tend to speak the language of their mothers.

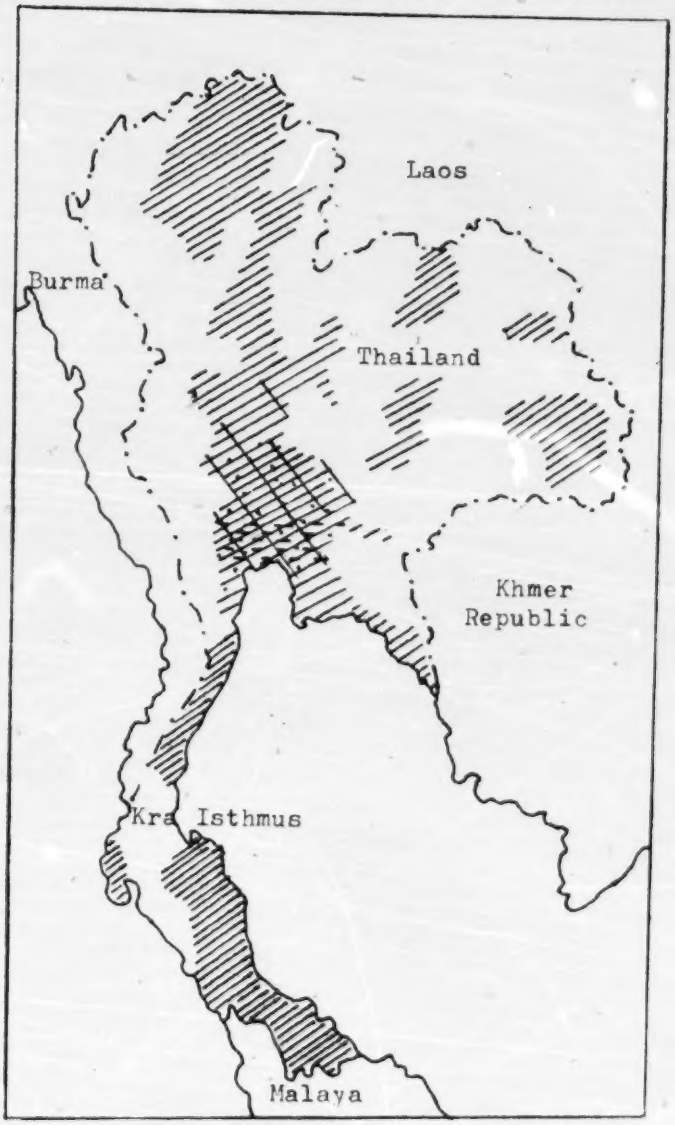
For lack of information about the dialects spoken, it is safe to say, (assuming that patterns of behavior among the Chinese are basically the same), that with the increase of female immigration during the beginning of this century, a Chinese-Chinese match will have a greater chance of using the dialect at home.
The following estimates are taken from Skinner: 1950, p.4.

Chao-zhou 60%, Ke-jia 12%, Hai-nan 12%, Cantonese 10%. A smaller group of some importance is the Min-nan dialect.

Map 9 shows a rough estimate of the dialect distribution in the country. Wherever there are Chinese communities, Chao-zhou is widely spoken.

Map 9

Thailand - Chinese Dialect Communities



North Vietnam, South Vietnam, the Khmer Republic & Laos

In all these four countries, with a total population of approximately forty eight and one half millions, the Chinese form about 2% or less. North Vietnam has very few Chinese because the development of the rice trade in the Tongkin area was in the hands of the Tongkin people who have intermarried with Chinese people and have 'acquired considerable skill, if not real mastery, of trade and industry. (Robequain: 1944, p.35). Therefore mass immigration was indirectly stemmed. However, the Chinese found a foothold in South Vietnam and the Khmer Republic, having to contend with less industrious and less numerous native peoples, and obtained a leading position in the rice trade. About 80% of the Chinese live in the former province of Cochin China.

South Vietnam

The Chinese form about 3% of the total population in South Vietnam. Cantonese is the predominant group, and since Cantonese is the trade language, almost all Chinese can speak some. The percentage distribution of the various groups is as follows:-

Cantonese	45%
Chao-zhou	30%
Ke-jia	10%
Min-nan	8%
Hai-nan	4%

The Khmer Republic

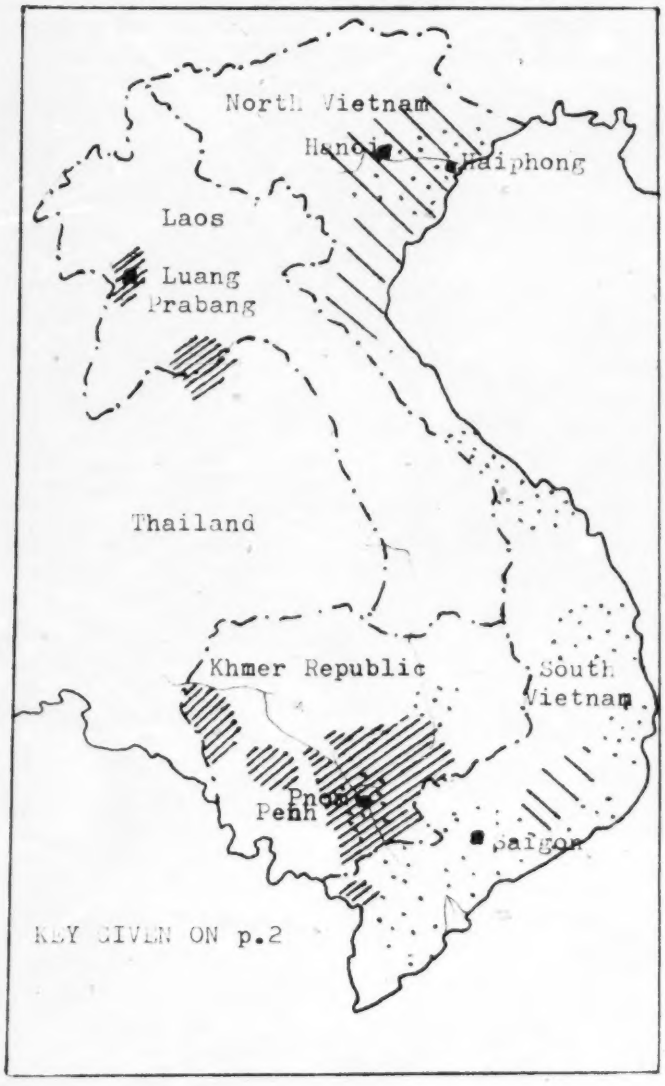
In this country, the Chao-zhou dialect speakers form the largest group, followed by Cantonese, Min-nan, Ke-jia and Hai-nan dialect speakers in that order. (See Map 10).

Percentage distribution of these dialect speakers, based on the total Chinese population is as follows:-

Chao-zhou	60%
Cantonese	20%
Min-nan	7%
Ke-jia	4%
Hai-nan	4%

Map 10

North & South Vietnam, the Khmer Republic and Laos - Chinese Communities



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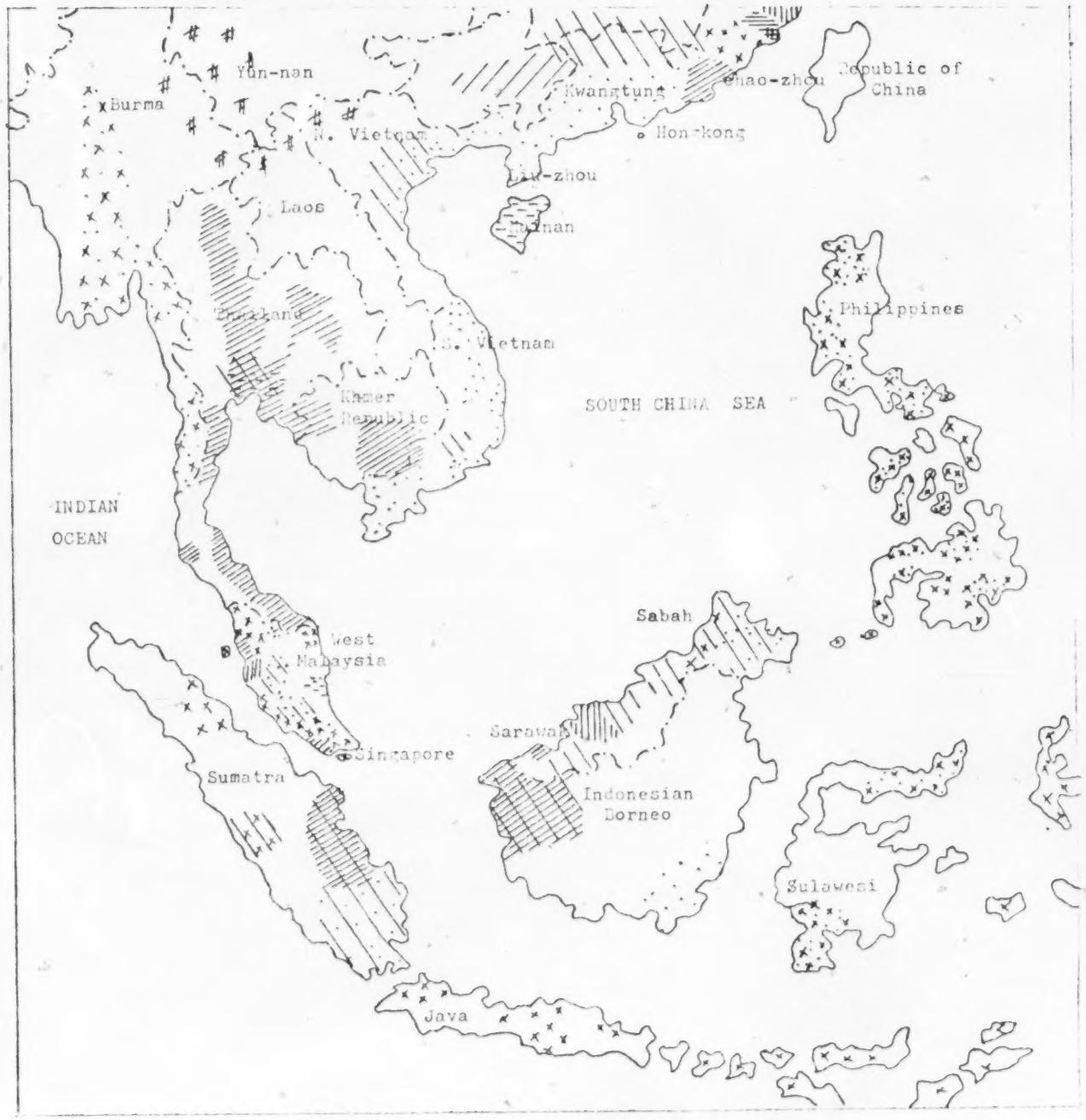
Map 11: Southeast Asia - Chinese Dialect Communities



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